

DISCUSSING TREATY MATTERS.

A Meeting of the Cabinet and Citizens at the Foreign Office.

Tuesday morning, a number of gentlemen interested in the country, met the Cabinet Ministers by invitation, at the Foreign Office, to talk over Treaty matters. Those present were Their Excellencies Jona. Austin, Minister of Foreign Affairs; L. A. Thurston, Minister of Interior; S. M. Damon, Minister of Finance, and C. W. Ashford, Attorney-General; Hons. C. R. Bishop, P. Isenberg, W. G. Irwin, Sam. Parker, J. B. Atherton, H. P. Baldwin, John M. Horner, E. C. Macfarlane, and A. Marques; Messrs. F. A. Schaefer, Robert Halstead, Theo. H. Davies, James B. Castle, A. Young, E. D. Tenney, W. A. Bowen, B. F. Dillingham, C. Bolte, Jas. W. Colville, and C. M. Cooke.

Minister Austin explained the object of the meeting. They had been asked to come in at the request of his colleagues, to talk over our treaty relations with the United States. When Mr. Carter (Minister to Washington) was here he was instructed to inquire whether the United States would be disposed to agree to an extension of relations on the basis of treaty protocols which he took with him. Mr. Carter having seen Mr. Blaine reports that he thinks the United States would be willing to entertain proposals if we are willing to make them. Mr. Austin here read the draft of treaty sent to Washington. It had been suggested recently that an effort be made to negotiate with the United States on the basis of this draft, with the omission of the fourth article which binds this country to make no treaty with any other country without the knowledge of the United States. He would like to hear the opinions of any gentleman present on the question.

Mr. James B. Castle read a letter he had sent to the Minister, which reviewed the history of the treaty in its different phases. He considered it the duty of this country to at once make an effort to secure a revision of the treaty. It would give us all the advantages of annexation with the opportunities of independence. There was no assurance at present of the permanence of existing treaty relations with the United States.

Hon. J. B. Atherton as an American citizen, in one respect believed in closer relations with the United States, notwithstanding he was not an annexationist in any manner. Having had conversations with Americans all the way from San Francisco to Boston, he believed that there was no sentiment in favor of annexation in that country. He would be surprised if such a treaty as that proposed could be made should it come up before Congress, but he believed that the prosperity of Hawaii would be enhanced if we could get such a treaty. It would be better for the natives, it would settle matters to the satisfaction of the anti-Chinese element. He could not see from what had been written, or from his own knowledge, that there was any thought of any interference with the independence of this country.

Mr. Theo. H. Davies did not think he was prepared to discuss the treaty at present, especially if they were to import into the discussion Mr. Atherton's conversations from San Francisco to Boston.

Minister Austin said it had been suggested that they might propose a treaty leaving out Article 4 and it was for the discussion of that question that they had invited the conference.

Minister Thurston said two questions could be propounded categorically. Is it desirable that negotiations be initiated on the basis of the first draft with Article 4 included? If not, should they make an attempt to secure the second measure? If Article 4 be eliminated, making it a mere matter of dollars and cents, what are the advantages to be derived from a revised treaty? One objection heard was that it was not advisable to negotiate a new treaty at present, because the tendency in the United States appeared to be toward throwing off the sugar duties entirely, therefore we are not safe in going on to negotiate on the basis of the present treaty. Without getting entire free trade and the insertion of the proposed bounty clause it was held that we should not proceed. A second argument is that even if the American sugar duties be not abolished, the chances are strong that at an early date the United States will negotiate treaties with Mexico and Central and South American republics, putting those countries on the same level with us with the practical effect of destroying all our special advantages from reciprocity. In such case should we hold ourselves ready to negotiate with other countries, for instance, Canada? So that the question they were asked to express their opinions on would be whether the Government should negotiate on the first project or the second one, and, if they decided in favor of the second, whether they should proceed with negotiations immediately.

Hon. J. M. Horner thought that under the terms of the proposed treaty, in case of losing the advantages of reciprocity by similar favors being granted other countries, we have the liberty of going southward. If the productions of those southern countries should overrun the United States, they would soon overrun Canada also, leaving no resource of relief in that quarter. His opinions ran with those read by Mr. Castle, but at the same time he saw no particular good in putting in Article 4. The United States is not alone protecting us, for the other Powers are holding protecting hands over us, and if that article should be stricken out we should still be protected. He did not see why that should be left in.

Hon. H. P. Baldwin said it seemed to him that this Government should act and act at once. It appeared to him impossible for the Government to act with Article 4, and therefore he thought the Government should act on the second proposal. Whatever their different political views might be they would agree that absolute free trade between the two countries would be of great advantage to Hawaii as well as to the United States. He thought that under such extension of trade the particular article we should export in addition to sugar would be wool. There are large tracks of land where we could raise wool, and he had heard the opinion expressed in the United States that it would be good if we could supply that country with a better class of wool than they can get from other countries. Therefore, this treaty would be advantageous not only to Hawaii but to the United States as well. They did not require to argue on the financial distress that would be caused in this country if the United States carry out the pro-

posed reduction of duties—it meant \$22 reduction of price on the ton of sugar, and many plantations could not stand it. One planter told him that morning that it would be better in such an event to lease the land to Chinese for rice. The country does not want anything of that kind. It simply means turning the country over to the Chinaman. Nothing had lately been said in the papers about asking for a bounty, but he understood that men interested in our raw material are alive to the matter. Mr. Spreckels, for instance, who says if the reduction of duties cannot be prevented he will work for a bounty. The United States protection to her own sugar has not amounted to much in results, but now the development of the beet and sorghum interests will make a demand for the bounty, so that these interests shall have the same protection as they have under the present tariff. This would shut up some outside cane sugar countries while giving the home production additional impetus. It seemed to the speaker that it would not be advisable for us to try to get any more than a commercial treaty. The United States is now waiting for the Hawaiian Government to act, and nothing will be done until it does act.

An Interesting Expression of Views on the Subject by Mr. Jas. B. Castle.

HONOLULU, March 31, 1890.

To His Excellency JONATHAN AUSTIN, Minister of Foreign Affairs, etc.

SIR: Uncertain of my ability to be present at the discussion proposed on the 1st inst. concerning the treaty with the United States, I take this method for the expression of my views on the subject. To introduce and at once bring the discussion to a focus, let me say that I believe it to be our duty as well as interest to seek not only a commercial but a strong political treaty. The easy prosperity of the last two years, the undisturbed possession of the treaty for fourteen years might easily beget a self-confidence and sense of security in all but the most thoughtful. To the latter, an examination of the simple facts of the situation conclusively show that a rude awakening from this dream of permanence would be no strange thing. Taken by single years we are apt to lose sight of the vast significance of the treaty in our prosperity and power of progress.

The great depression of sugar prices in 1883 and 1884 will not be soon forgotten. Deduct from the low average price reached by sugar in those years, the average duty, and the result would have been collapse, so well nigh universal, that the Cuban failures of those years would have been little more than suggestive. Without the treaty it is safe to say the islands would have remained as inert and undeveloped as before. What was considered as absolutely essential for our prosperity in 1875 is quite as essential now, for while we have made great progress in manufacture, a progress to which European bounties were doubtless a great stimulant, and we have, as it were, at arms reach and within sight the amount of realizable sugar in the cane, that same bounty system has caused an expansion of the world's production that means a permanent lower average price.

It is immaterial to the discussion that but one or two industries are directly affected by this treaty. The general prosperity is as vitally affected by an injury thereto as if twenty industries were equally directly affected. We practically have no industry but sugar. The last legislature, with the aid of the veto, saw fit to kill the bill which, at a total possible cost of \$35,000, would probably in a few years, have made coffee a leading item of export; our only product of conspicuous superiority which is on America's free list, and therefore one strong standby without treaty. What is clearer than the necessity of the treaty when we see the failure of such an effort? To the versatility of our resources the country is but just awakening. We are but barely freed from the incubus of corrupt administration; we have but just encountered and hardly overcome the obstacle to all progress—of autocratic rule. We have only just reached the point at which our advantages become available. To lose the treaty now would be far more than a financial calamity. It would destroy the hopes, never before so well grounded, of a progress in the next decade, which should eclipse the last in quality as well as quantity. It would cripple the power, a power derived from treaty benefits, to diversify our industries, to develop our resources, to maintain an enlightened immigration policy, to improve the relation of wage-earner and employer, to build public works and to educate as we ought. It would forever settle the Chinese question by driving wages below zero and opening wide the doors for the Celestial thousands who only, then, can make sugar profitable. It would indefinitely postpone the possibility of the best results of a constitutional government by an intelligent people. In brief, our power of accomplishment for the future is that with which the treaty has armed us. To some, much of this may sound stale and hackneyed, but it appears to me that it is needed. Not infrequently talk of Hawaiian independence sounds as though we were so in all senses, but we must never forget our absolute commercial dependence. Closely intertwined with that dependence are the chances and sources of our political independence. The only independence we desire or need is the liberty to control our internal affairs. Of any political independence beyond that let the "Kaimiloa" forever stand as the symbol. After fourteen years of treaty prosperity, having been enabled thereby to maintain this great industry in spite of the tremendous depression caused by European bounties, comes our powerful patron with whom fourteen years ago we made an agreement supposedly reciprocal and which, in benefit to ourselves, has exceeded any to the United States beyond the highest estimates of our enemies, and is willing to renew this agreement if we make such concessions as we can without any loss of self respect. Without waiting for any overtures on the part of the United States seeking modification and alteration of the treaty, it is our bounden duty as well as interest to show our willingness to make any concessions possible. I understand that it is proposed to ask the United States for a treaty from which every political feature shall be eradicated and, out herding Herod, proposes to seek from the United States a treaty more conspicuously one-sided even than that with which a generous and powerful friend has helped us heretofore. Assuming, even in advance, the

possibility of the departure from precedent on their part to the extent of bounty, we bid for even greater departure seeking for its application to ourselves, a stranger without the gates, and offer not one consideration in return, of a nature which will guarantee our good faith. An individual's word may be as good as his bond. Between nations treaties are the only proof of intended good faith.

We are not about to discuss the making of a treaty with any European power with all the complications and possibilities incidental thereto. We seek to renew a partnership, greatly one-sided heretofore and, in the very nature of the case, to be forever one-sided at best, but with a nation which has proved, since the pioneers first landed in Hawaii, its friendship and good will; with a nation which has shown that behind any treaty phraseology lies hidden no dangerous possibility; that all that is meant and intended is said, and that he who runs may read. Now we believe that entering into a treaty, agreeing to make no other treaties without the full knowledge of this our partner, will be considered a guarantee of our faith plus an added consideration to them. In consideration of their guarantee of our independence even of themselves, we guarantee not to bind ourselves by treaty with any other nation without their full preliminary knowledge. To have added "and consent" would be no less than they could reasonably ask. But it has not been asked nor is it proposed. It may be imagined the possibilities of annexation lie within the proposed treaty. I beg to state that I am an Hawaiian, literally and in sentiment; have never voted in any other country; have been from the beginning a believer in the wisdom and benefit, both for ourselves and others, of Hawaiian independence and more strenuously so than ever once admitted autocracy has given place to constitutional government. To believe that the proposed treaty would mean less than it says, or be strained to uses beyond its face is to comment on the hollowness of treaties as between other nations, and to impugn the intentions of the United States as endorsed by the whole of American history in its foreign relations. If the United States are favorable to the lately proposed treaty, Your Excellency, they are asking less than I, as a strenuous believer in Hawaiian independence, would be perfectly willing to pledge and guarantee, namely the so-called "supervision of our foreign office" by the United States Department of State which is such a bugbear to a few of foreign birth, but the treaty proposed would be more generous to us for it would be the supervision of counsel and of knowledge, without the demand of even a partner's voice in the control. It is the strongest guarantee which we can seek that constitutional government shall go on to its full expression and an Anglo-Saxon civilization the highest development, unhampered by a perpetual commercial uncertainty. Mark you, no consent is demanded preliminary to our treaty making with other powers, but the mere knowledge of such treaties as are intended and desired. This can not possibly compromise our independence and is a very moderate concession to a nation to whom we owe so much. Such supervision might be called by loose thinkers an equivalent of annexation. On the contrary it would be the strongest guarantee which this country has ever received of its independence even from the United States. I believe in such a treaty, if it is possible to secure it, for the sake of the native Hawaiian. Let commercial collapse or tremendous depression at any time ensue and our only escape then from utter stagnation and retrogression would be the alternate of annexation to the United States or the wholesale immigration of Chinese, already depicted. Such annexation, as far as we can foretell, would be for the native Hawaiian political obliteration and the wholesale Chinese immigration, race extermination. This treaty would give us all the advantages of annexation and all the opportunities of independence.

Apology for taking the time of those who listen to this would be impertinent. The great importance of the subject justifies effort on the part of every one who desires Hawaiian prosperity and progress, to continue to assist in the acquisition of such a treaty. We should unite as one man in the determination that nothing less than a legal or religious cause shall prevent or even delay the commission that will enable negotiations. The situation is urgent. The late report of the Congressional committee recommending bounty payment none here probably anticipate seeing me law. None the less is it a ringing note of warning to us of the weakness of our foundation and the instability of our commercial values, which it would be suicidal not to heed, promptly and effectively. If one doubts the justness of my estimate of the Treaty's importance to our commercial prosperity and almost existence, a study of the Custom Statistics for fourteen years, supplemented by a review of the world's sugar manufacturing history for the same time will, I think, convince the most skeptical. It is long since a recourse to figures became necessary to enhance the sense of importance of the treaty. I have therefore not taken your time in statistics. I am, sir,

Your most obdt. servant,
(Signed) JAMES B. CASTLE.

Other gentlemen made remarks and finally the Cabinet was advised to proceed with negotiations for a new treaty with Article 4 left out.

Nicaragua Canal.

In accordance with a cablegram received from New York, thirty of the engineers and clerks on the canal at Greytown were discharged.

The rapid reduction of the pay-roll of the Canal Company does not look as though work was being pushed with that energy that we read about in the American newspapers that are booming the canal. A month ago there were 675 men on the works, but to-day not over 500 remain, and the prospect is that a good many of these will soon go. The work will now be confined to Sillio, where rock is being taken out for the breakwater. Five hundred out of 1,700 feet of piling have been driven to a depth of ten feet. Some wisacres say that a strong current, caused by a change in the river channel, is liable to undermine this work at any time, though at present the action of the water is banking up sand along the line. No mattresses are down, no filling has been done as yet to speak of, and work will soon have to be stopped unless more piles come to hand.

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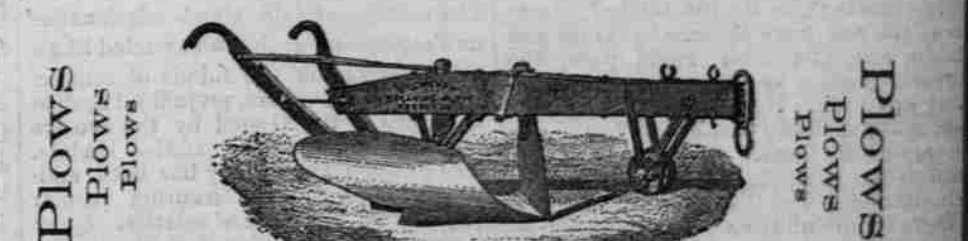
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